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THE ZUÑI MO'LAWIA.

BY ELSIE CLEWS PARSONS.

THIS ceremonial occurs on the final day of the great *sha'lako* ceremonial. It *appears*¹ to have none but an arbitrarily chronological connection with *sha'lako*. The origin myth it dramatizes was narrated to me in answer to my queries about one of the fraternities, — the *ne'wěkwě*, or galaxy. It was narrated by an aged medicine-man in that fraternity. A variant is given by Mrs. Stevenson.² She also gives an account of the ceremonial. Because of the variations in the two accounts — due in part to different sources of information, and in part too, perhaps, to the decadence of Zuñi sacerdotalism (during the last few decades that decadence has been notable in numerous particulars) — it seems worth while publishing the latter account, its data gathered twenty years or more after the former.

THE MYTH.

The *atowa awishtokyi* ("corn-maidens") belonged to the *kya'kwemosi tlashi* (*tlashi*, "old"), the head rain-priest. The two³ children of the Sun (the twin war-gods⁴) wanted intercourse with the maidens, and so the maidens ran away. The east-end *shiwanni* ("rain-priest") wanted them to find the maidens. They called the Eagle. He went everywhere and looked everywhere. He could not find the maidens. They called *pipe*, the Owl. He could not find the maidens. They called *shokiapise*, the Chicken-Hawk. He could not find the maidens. They called *anela*, the Night-Hawk. He could not find the maidens. The west-end people then came to the *kya'kwemosi tla'shi*. He said none could find the maidens but the *ne'wěkwě*. They sent for the *ne'wěkwě*. They asked him to find the maidens. He put the seed of the *ilanilloko* ("cotton-wood tree") in the ground. It grew up to the sky. He climbed the tree. When he got up, he saw the corn-maidens hiding in the ocean under the wings of a duck. He came

¹ But until we know more about the meaning of *sha'lako*, nothing positive can be said on this point. All I could get from my principal informant was, "That was the way it was meant in order that the *mo'lawi* should be a part of the *ko'ko*;" i.e., the gods.

² The Zuñi Indians (23d Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, 1901-02, pp. 48-49, 51-54).

³ Subsequently I was told that there were other children of the Sun who also had designs on the maidens.

⁴ According to Mrs. Stevenson, the would-be ravisher was Payatāmu; but Payatāmu is another name, says Mrs. Stevenson, for Bitsitsi, or the first *ne'wěkwě*, he who goes to look for the maidens (*Ibid.*, pp. 48, 430).

down and went in to the *a'shiwanni* (*a*, plural prefix). They asked him if he had found the maidens, and he said, "Yes." They asked him where the maidens were. He said, "I will get them for you if you do exactly as I say. If you want them badly enough to do as I say, I will get them." They agreed. He said, "We have to make six plumes, — *tluptsin* ['yellow'], *ilian* ['blue'], *shilowa* ['red'], *k'ohañ* ['white'], *pintopa* ['spotted'], *kw'in* ['black']. To-morrow morning have them prepare your meat. In the evening eat until you are full, and drink. Then for six days you may not eat, or sleep, or speak to one another. The morning after your first night of fast, I will fast. I will give the six plumes into the hands of the *pekwin*.¹ Each day he is to give me one. The first day he will call in the Sand-Crane. This one is to prepare me for my journey. Then we have to have a rabbit, because rabbits are the most enduring of the animals. We have to kill it and take out its tongue. When I put that in my mouth, we shall not speak any more. That will be the end of our speech." The next morning the Sand-Crane makes the stripes around the ankles of the *ne'wëkwë*, below his knees, around his hips, around his wrists, around his shoulders, on his face, on his forehead. His hair he puts in one knot sticking forward over his forehead. In the knot he puts one grain of corn of each of six kinds. He puts six grains, one of each kind, over his stomach, in his belt. The rabbit's tongue he puts in his mouth. The *ne'wëkwë* goes to the *pekwin*. The *pekwin* hands him his basket of plumes. The *ne'wëkwë* takes the yellow plume. Before sunrise he plants it facing the west. He returns, and they are in the house of the *a'shiwanni* all night. The next morning before sunrise he takes the blue plume and goes beyond where he planted the yellow plume, and plants it facing the west. He returns. The next morning before sunrise he takes the red plume and goes beyond where he planted the blue plume, and plants it facing the west. He returns. The next morning before sunrise he takes the white plume and plants it beyond the red plume, and facing the west. He returns. The next morning before sunrise he takes the spotted plume and plants it beyond the white plume, and facing the west. He returns. That night the *a'shiwanni* almost give out. The next morning before sunrise he takes from the *pekwin* the black plume and plants it at the door of the house where the maidens live, on the edge of the ocean. There are four rooms in this house, one on top of another. Two White Swans live in this house. They see the *ne'wëkwë* coming, and tell the maidens, saying they had better prepare for their return-journey. The corn-maidens say, "We are not going ourselves, because

¹ Or rather, as it was explained to me subsequently, of him who at a later day was to be the *pekwin*. My informant appeared to reason as a kind of after-thought that at the period of which he was speaking there was no *pekwin* proper.

of the two children of the Sun, but we will make representatives (*ikimnashanawa*) and send them." Each maiden bathes herself, and takes the rubbings from her body¹ and makes them into a shape like an ear of corn, each ear colored like its maiden maker. They put these shapes before the fireplace and cover them up. These, say the maidens, the women can grind; and the flour they can rub on their faces, and that will make them pretty and white.²

After the *ne'wëkwë* had planted before the door, the old-man Swan and the old woman said to him, "Have you come?" He nodded. "Have you come for the corn-maidens?" they asked, and he nodded again. "Walk in and speak to the maidens!" they said. He went up the four ladders to the top room, and thence descended into the ground chamber. "Have you come?" asked the corn-maidens, and he nodded. They asked if he had come after them, and he nodded again. "We will go with you," they said, "but we will not stay. But we have made our representatives, and we will leave them, so you will have the corn to live on." He was happy, but he said nothing. Then each corn-maiden took her basket of corn on her head. All came out, — first *owa* (old Swan), then the *ne'wëkwë*, then the Duck, then the corn-maidens. Arriving at the house of the *a'shiwanni*, the *ne'wëkwë* shakes two long eagle-feathers around *owa*, emitting a whistling sound (*bitsitsi*), and *owa* comes up into the house. He circles the room from west to east until he reaches the *pekwin*. The *pekwin* gives him a cigarette. *Owa* draws one breath and hands it to the other *a'shiwanni*. Each draws one breath. *Owa* then circles the altar and withdraws. Then the Sand-Crane says a prayer and removes from the mouth of the *ne'wëkwë* the tongue of the rabbit. The *ne'wëkwë* says that he has brought the corn-maidens, but not to stay. They would have their flesh. The *a'shiwanni* are not very happy, but they say it cannot be helped. It cannot be helped, because their children had thought only of their own pleasure, taking no thought of their fathers. The *ne'wëkwë* tells the maidens to go on; he will be slow in following, for he is going to the prayer-plumes he has planted, to turn them about to face the east. The Duck calls for his grandfather, *amitona*, the Rainbow. Getting on him, the Duck and the

¹ It was in this way the *ne'wëkwë* himself originated. There were three *shi'wannakwe* (the oldest fraternity), — two men and one woman. They were old and alone. The two children of the Sun said to them, "It is too bad you are alone. Take rubbings of your skin. Make a little figure of that. Cover it up and sing over it." They did, and a little boy came up. He was never still, and he talked all the time. It was all the same to him what he said, he did not care for the effect. He was the first *ne'wëkwë*. (Cf. Mrs. Stevenson, "The Zufi Indians," p. 408.) And to-day, although the *ne'wëkwë* are regardless of all rules, none takes offence. The *ne'wëkwë* will even speak in Mexican or English before a *ko'ko* (sacred masked personage), a speech forbidden to others.

² "That is why," interpolated my woman interpreter, "you will see the girls to-day rub now and then, as they grind, a little flour on their face."

maidens return home. This way, in the west, it is always summer, since there the maidens live.

THE DRAMATIZATION.

The final day of the *sha'lako* occurred in 1915 on Dec. 18. That morning at 11.45, when the dancers were in the plaza, in *tsia'a' te'hwita*, I saw the *ne'wëkwë* (Bitsitsi)¹ enter the plaza from the southern passage, cross the plaza very deliberately, mount the ladder to *heiwa kiwitsine*, and descend into its hatchway. In about twenty minutes he reappeared, and departed by the same way. About an hour later I saw him come in again. He makes six such trips, planting each time a prayer-plume. He plants at different spots, "hills," between the pueblo and *kushilowa* (*kutile*, "sand embankment;" *shilowa*, "red"), a place on the river about half a mile east of the town. His prayer-plumes correspond in color to the color of those figuring in the myth. When he is within *he'iwa kiwitsine* between trips, nothing in particular takes place. The *a'shiwann*i are there. Bitsitsi watches that none sleeps. Mrs. Stevenson's description and picture of Bitsitsi are accurate,² except that the upper line of white paint on his face runs, not under his eyes, but across his eyelids. This year his Navaho blanket had red in it as well as gray and white.³

About 3 P.M. *awan tachu ko'yemshi*⁴ and the *pekwin* were seen going through the village towards the southeast (the *pekwin* has first sprinkled all the *ko'yemshi* with meal, I am told), and an hour later they returned with the corn-maidens, — thirteen of them, — with Bitsitsi and Pautiwa.⁵ In single file, all proceeded into *tsia'a' te'hwita*, — first the *pekwin*, then Bitsitsi, then *awan tachu ko'yemshi*, then Pautiwa, then the maidens. The number of corn-maidens⁶ varies from year to year. Once in recent years there was only one youth to volunteer. According to Mrs. Stevenson, four are supposed to come from each of the six *kiwitsine* or sacred club-houses. They are chosen by the chief *wole* or manager of the *kiwitsine*. The *kyakwemoši* also appears to have something to say. Mrs. Stevenson mentions fifteen on one occasion,

¹ Bitsitsi is an onomatopoeic term for his rabbit-like whistle.

² The Zuñi Indians, p. 277 and plate LXXVI. His "baton" is called *tanauna*.

³ This blanket, as well as the gray and black and white blanket of *awan dachu ko'yemshi*, may be borrowed for the occasion. There is much borrowing of blankets as well as of other articles of apparel or adornment for the ceremonials.

⁴ *Awan tachu* ("their father") *ko'yemshi* is the senior in the group of ten "delight-makers" which figure so much in Zuñi ceremonials. Here he is to be the representative (*ikimnashanawa*) of the duck of the myth.

⁵ Pautiwa is, according to Mrs. Stevenson, the "director-general" of the *ko'ko* or gods. In this ceremonial he is the representative (*ikimnashanawa*) of *owa* of the myth. For his mask see The Zuñi Indians, plate xxviii.

⁶ In the myth the maidens were not numbered. There were many.

twenty-three on another.¹ The maidens wear the regulation dance-kilts, fox-skins, sashes, and moccasins. Their skirts are worn over their ordinary trousers. Their ordinary shirts are decorated with favors of multi-colored, store-bought ribbons. Their hair is flowing, and also adorned with ribbons. In it is a bunch of four yellow parrot-feathers. Each maiden carries a *mili*² and *telikinawe*.³ Each has been dressed by her ceremonial father (he who initiated her into the *ko'tikili*) and the man's wife; the man dressing her, and the woman doing her hair. All have gone out to a small ravine on the southeast⁴ outskirts of the town.⁵ Here a little way from the ravine as many girls as there are male personators of the corn-maidens are stood in line, each girl representing a personator. The girl has been chosen by the ceremonial father. She is his daughter or a kinswoman of his wife. The girls are sprinkled and prayed over,⁶ and started off to run a race to the ravine. The order in which they arrive is the order taken in the line by the personators of the corn-maidens. It is these girls who supply the corn and the melons the corn-maidens carry in to the plaza. Until this year they carried the corn and melons in a basket on their head. This year the corn was slung in a kerchief or cloth across their neck and shoulders.⁷ Melons were not carried at all, — a singular omission, since, although there is no mention of melons in the myth, the name of the ceremonial, *mo'lawia*, means "melons come." It is at the ravine that the *pekwin* and *awan tachu* have joined the corn-maidens.

Two or three minutes after the group had entered the plaza,⁸ I saw Bitsitsi and Pautiwa on the roof of *he'iwa kiwitsine*,⁹ Bitsitsi tapping the thighs of Pautiwa with his eagle-feathers and emitting his characteristic whistling sound as Pautiwa was about to descend the ladder into the *kitwitsine*. Bitsitsi, with great deliberation, followed him

¹ The Zufi Indians, p. 277, footnote *c*.

² Sacred ear of corn wrapped with feathers. Every initiate into the *ko'tikili* receives a *mili*. The *ko'tikili* is the fraternity into which every lad is initiated.

³ Prayer-plumes.

⁴ Not *kushilowa*, but nearer the town (cf. Mrs. Stevenson, pp. 278-279).

⁵ In spite of protests, a Zufi household of strong sacerdotal affiliations has lately built a new house near by. Recently, when the American storekeeper wished to build near *hepatina*, a great outcry arose over the violation of that sacrosanct spot.

⁶ This year by Unidiwa, a man of the *aiyahokwe* clan. According to Mrs. Stevenson, it was a *aiyahokwe* man who held office for life who chose the girls (The Zufi Indians, p. 277, footnote *c*. This is a *aiyahokwe* clan office, the incumbent chosen by the clan.

⁷ Because it is much easier to carry in this way. Little innovations of this kind are very significant, I think, of the disintegration of sacerdotalism in Zufi.

⁸ Just as the party arrived at the plaza, the roof of the *he'iwa sha'lako* house fell in. Those spectators on the roofs near at hand hastened over to the place. There was considerable commotion, but the ceremonial proceeded without a moment's break.

⁹ The *pekwin* had already descended into the *kiwitsine*.

down. In about ten minutes Pautiwa emerged alone, and walked out of the plaza by the western passage.

As Mrs. Stevenson states,¹ Pautiwa has carried a gourd jug of water,² the neck filled with grass,³ into the *kiwitsine*. He leaves it there to be carried subsequently by the elder and younger brother bow-priests and one of the *a'shiwanni* to *hepatina*, and poured out there. The elder brother bow-priest carries the gourd; the younger brother bow-priest carries a cedar brand and whirls a rhombus. The grass is left at *hepatina*, but the gourd is brought back and left on the altar in the *kiwitsine*. The gourd belongs to the *a'shiwanni*.⁴

When Pautiwa enters the *kiwitsine*, he is seated by the *pekwin*, and "smoked" by him in the six directions. In utter silence all present sprinkle him with meal.

During this time *awan tachu ko'yemshi* has been standing in the plaza at the head of the line of corn-maidens. As soon as Pautiwa emerges from the *kiwitsine* and withdraws from the plaza, *awan tachu* leads the line past the *kiwitsine* ladder; and the maiden next him falls out of line, sprinkles with meal the lower rungs of the ladder, and ascends. She walks to the northeast corner of the *kiwitsine* roof, standing there facing the north. Bitsitsi emerges from the hatchway. With arms crossed, he walks at his usual measured pace to the maiden, and taps her thighs with the eagle-feathers he holds in each hand, emitting at the same time his whistle. She turns as he taps, making one entire revolution and a quarter, thereby facing the northwest corner of the *kiwitsine*. Sprinkling meal ahead of her, she walks into the northwest corner, and stands facing the west. Bitsitsi follows, and the manoeuvre of turning her is repeated. In this way she proceeds to the southwest corner and to the southeast. In each corner she stands on a cross of meal that has been sprinkled there some time earlier in the day by the *pekwin*. In the southeast corner the maiden has been turned by Bitsitsi to face the hatchway. From it the *kyakwemosi tlashi* now emerges, and, sprinkling her *telikinawe*, takes from her shoulders the corn-filled kerchief. Passing it to the *kyakwemosi tsana* ("little") standing half way up the ladder, he himself descends. The corn-maiden walks to the hatchway, and, tapped by Bitsitsi, descends. Bitsitsi follows. In silence the corn is passed from *shiwanni* to *shiwanni* and put down. In silence the maiden takes her seat.

Meanwhile in the plaza *awan tachu ko'yemshi* has led the line of corn-maidens in a circle back to the foot of the ladder. He breaks the

¹ The Zuñi Indians, p. 279.

² Taken, not from a well, but from "one of the springs."

³ *Tosatu*, "or any other kind of grass" growing around the spring.

⁴ When I asked the meaning of this little rite, a rite to which nothing in the myth corresponds, I was merely told that "all Zuñi ceremonies are for rain and snow."

speak. The *pekwin* empties the kerchiefs of corn, and gives them to the maidens. Then Bitsitsi and the maidens leave the *kiwitsine*, he to turn to the east the plumes he has planted facing the west, and they to deposit their plumes at *kushilowa*.

On their return to the pueblo, the heads of the maidens are washed by the wife and household of their ceremonial father. Bitsitsi returns to *he'iwa kiwitsine* to receive his allotment of the corn,¹ and to have his ceremonial father remove the corn enmeshed in his hair and in his belt, tie his hair at the back, and remove his blanket. Both go to the house of the ceremonial father. There Bitsitsi's top-knot is washed. They eat and they pray, Bitsitsi (or, properly speaking, his personator) returning home about midnight.

The rôle of Bitsitsi has to be played by a *ne'wëkwë*, and every member of the fraternity is supposed to play it once at least. The rôle of the ceremonial father of Bitsitsi is not taken, as one might infer, by a Sand-Crane clansman, but by any *ne'wëkwë* who knows the prayers. Of interest in this connection is the fact that the *ne'mosi* or head of the *ne'wëkwë* fraternity must be the child of the Sand-Crane Clan; i.e., his father must be a Sand-Crane.² The present *ne'mosi* is himself, however, a Sand-Crane man, and the child of the Bear Clan. In this year's ceremony he took no part. The *ne'wëkwë* are a rapidly diminishing fraternity. I surmise that as a result of their diminution the old rules of office are difficult to follow; and I also surmise that the personator of the ceremonial father of Bitsitsi was originally a Sand-Crane.³

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¹ The corn is distributed between all taking part in the ceremony. I note incidentally that the *a'shiwanni* have fasted one day and one night before the ceremony.

² The Zuñi clan is metronymic.

³ I have since learned from my Zuñi informant that he was. The year Mrs. Stevenson describes the ceremony, the part of the ceremonial father was taken by the *ne'mosi* (The Zuñi Indians, p. 281).

Since writing the foregoing, I have learned that when the gourd is in the *kiwitsine*, it is sprinkled with meal by all present; that after the *pekwin* smokes Pautiwa, he deposits the cigarette on the grass in the mouth of the gourd; that the elder brother bow-priest pours the water of the gourd into the stone vases at *hepatina*; that he and his two companions plant *telikinawe* there; that the *ko'mosona* gives the bowl of medicine-water near the altar (the medicine-water belongs to the *ashiwanni*) to the corn-maidens and the others present to drink, exchanging terms of relationship,—*tachumo-talemo* with the maidens, *tachumo-nanamo* with the bow-priests; that he also squirts the water from his mouth on those present, and drinks of it himself; that two *kopillashiwanni* are present in the *kiwitsine*; that they and the *komosona*, the *pekwin*, *ko'pekwin*, *ashiwanni*, bow-priests, and Bitsitsi have all fasted a day and a night prior to the ceremonial. (See, too, Stevenson, pp. 277-282.)